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ABSTRACT

Characteristics of youthful offenders are described, and the role of the individualized education program (IEP) in a training school is considered. The bulk of the paper discusses Project Adventure, a therapeutic program for offenders which emphasizes physical fitness games, risk taking activities, initiative taking, and group cooperation to solve problems. The rope activities begin on the ground and progress to 30 to 40 feet off the ground. After the activities, staff encourages the group to express feelings and examine reactions. Students keep a journal and are given a test on related terms and safety factors. Activities develop trust and self concept as well as help to fulfill some of the students' attention seeking needs, reduce aggressive behavior, and develop concern for others. Sample IEPs are appended. (CL)

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THE USE OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN AND PROJECT ADVENTURE TO MODIFY THE EDUCATIONAL, BEHAVIORAL AND ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS OF YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of aliented youth remains persistent. Crimes committed by juveniles has increased steadily since 1960. The Federal Bureau of Investigation reports that juvenile arrests increased by 138% between 1960 and 1974 (Neill, 1978). Other researchers have reported that the number of crimes committed by youth "is disproportionate to their number in the total population," (Sarri, 1980). For example,

> In 1977, youth 15 to 18 years of age comprised 7% of the population, but they accounted for 16% of all arrests for violent crime against persons and 46% of all arrests for major crime against property (Sarri, 1980).

In this presentation, the characteristics of youth in training schools, their educational problems as well as their behavioral and attitudinal problems will be discussed. The Individualized Educational Plan will be presented as one method to meet their needs. An innovative recreational program which is helping to alleviate some of the antisocial behaviors will be presented.

Characteristics of Youth in Training Schools

In 1970, North Carolina led the nation in the number of children in training schools. From the 1970 enrollment of more than 2,000 average daily population, there has been a significant decrease. In June 1980, North Carolina had 876 youths in the state's five training schools. Two factors were principally responsible for this decrease: 1) Status offenders have not been sent to training schools since 1978; and 2) Judges must employ other

alternatives such as weekend detention, probation, restitution and community based programs before sending an offender to a training school.

But, also as a result of the above, those committed to training schools have committed more serious crimes than previously and, as is true nationwide, the number of crimes against persons has increased significantly (News and Observer, 1980).

A closer look at some of the characteristics of the training school population in North Carolina reveals:

- Approximately 30% are from five counties, which include urban, metropolitan areas.
- Age range is 11 to 17 years.
- Approximately 70% are 14 and 15 years old.
- Blacks and Whites are nearly equally distributed.
- Approximately 90% are male.
- Range of crimes is very broad: Robbery, armed robbery, assault, burgulary, breaking and entering, larcency, motor vehicle theft, forgery, counterfeiting, shoplifting, possession of stolen property, vandalism, sex offenses, drugs, disorderly conduct, and forcible rape.
- More "hard core crimes" are committed than previously.
- Approximately 20% of the student population has been transferred from one school to another. The majority of the transfers are to C.A. Dillon School for disciplinary reasons.
- Prior to committment, less than 25% were living with both parents, more than 36% were living with mother only, and more than 20% were in fostercare, institutional care or living with other relatives.
- Educational level of parents is approximately one year below the overall average for the state.
- About 40% of the families receive AFDC, food stamps or Social Security.
- Approximately 60% come from families of three or more children.
- Major family problems include child abuse/neglect, parental criminal court involvement, and alcohol.
- Prior to committment, the student averaged 2.6 contacts with social agencies.

- Prior to committment, the student averaged 3.4 contacts with juvenile court authorities.
- Almost 75% of the offenders committed are first committments (Department of Human Resources).

The Use of the Individualized Education Plan in a Transitional Setting

Upon committment, the student at a training school will be assessed by a psychologist. The test battery will include the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R), the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) and other instruments as needed. If a student is found to have an exceptionality, he is then referred to the School Based Committee. The most frequent exceptionalities are emotional disturbance, learning disabilities, mental retardation and speech handicaps. At the training school, the School Based Committee is generally comprised of the following; principal (chairperson), psychologist, teacher, nurse, social worker, recreational staff, resource teacher, guidance counselor, and if deemed necessary or appropriate, psychiatrist and/or cottage counselor. After the School Based Committee reviews all material and a consensus is reached that the child is exceptional, the next step is to obtain parental consent for further assessment, and eventual placement (Spann, 1980).

An Individualized Education Program (I.E.P) for an alienated youth in a transitional setting, i.e., training school, is written according to the guidelines set forth by the State and are the same guidelines that are used in the public schools (See Appendix A). According to the Department of Public Instruction, an I.E.P. for every exceptional child must include:

- a statement of the child's present levels of education performance;
- a statement of annual goals;
- a statement of short-term instruc ional objectives;
- a statement of specific education and related services to be provided to the child;
- a description of the extent to which the child will participate in regular education programs and a description of the program to be provided;
- the projected dates for initiation of services and the anticipated duration of services;
- objective criteria evaluation procedures, and schedules for determining on at least an annual basis, whether the short-term instructional objectives are being achieved (Division for Exceptional Children/State Department of Public Instruction).

At the I.E.P. Conference, specific instructional objectives will be detailed based on the student's strengths and weaknesses as shown by the evaluative instruments (See Appendix A). In addition to the School Based Committee, the parent or surrogate parent and the student will participate in the development of the I.E.P.

All teachers of a particular student participate in the implementation of the I.E.P. In addition, each teacher prepares an Individual Written Plan of Action (See Appendix B) for each student, which is specific for each teacher or class (Spann, 1980).

Behavioral and Attitudinal Problems of Youth in Training Schools

In addition to the academic deficiencies, students in training schools also display behavioral and attitudinal problems which require attention and remediation.

According to the Department of Human Resources, the behavioral problems which are most frequently identified in the training school population are

temper outbursts, other substance abuse, alcohol abuse, chronic fighting and compulsive behavior. Other frequently mentioned problems are sexual deviancy, destruction of property, depression, anxiety, self-abuse, cruelty to animals, enuresis, seizure symptoms, dizziness and loss of memory.

The attitudinal problems which are most often identified in the training school population include difficulty accepting supervision, lack of self-control, difficulties in cooperation with both peers and staff, poor self concept, and trust. Other attitudinal problems which occur on a much less frequent basis are problems with personal cleaniness and work responsibilities (Department of Human Resources, 1979).

In addition to dealing with the academic problems presented by the student, the teacher at the training school must deal with many, if not all, of these antisocial behaviors and attitudes.

Changes in Behavior and Attitudinal Problems Via Project Adventure

A model innovative program which is helping students overcome some antisocial behaviors is Project Adventure which is being implemented at four of the five schools under the auspices of Youth Services in the State.

Project Adventure in North Carolina is modeled after the original project which began in Massachusetts in 1970-71 with a grant from Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Since that time Project Adventure which is a ropes course facility for recreational and therapeutic benefits has been adapted to settings ranging from elementary schools to colleges including agencies, alternative schools, summer camps, outdoor centers and others (Rohnke, 1977).

In addition to being a ropes course facility, Project Adventure is a curriculum designed to develop balance, coordination, agility, and a

therapeutic program which emphasizes physcial fitness games, adventure activities, conquering obstacles, classroom instruction, knot tying, belaying, using safety techniques,initiative taking and learning group cooperation to solve problems. The slide presentation will show the activities which are a part of the project. The activities begin on the ground, and progress to activities which are 30-40 feet off the ground and culminate with the Zip Wire which has the student at a height of about 30 feet descending over 300 feet to ground level.

After the activities, the staff helps the group express and examine feelings and emotional reactions by discussing such questions as "How did you feel?" "Why did you feel thay way" and others.

Each student keeps a daily journal of at least a half page. The staff of the course helps with spelling, grammar, and sentence construction. The course aids in vocabulary development as the student encounters new words which are specific to the course. At the completion of the course, students are given an examination on the terms, elements of the course and safety factors. This allows the staff to compare the academic performance of the student in this course to his usual academic performance (Sulkowski and Leonard, 1971).

Lucious Bullock, physical education teacher and Project Adventure Supervisor at C.A. Dillon School discussed the importance of development of trust as the students progress through the course. Probably 85% of the students referred by their treatment team or the School Based Committee are referred for lack of trust or low self concept. The importance of trust, the difficulty of developing trust and, many times, previous relationships that have destroyed trust are discussed. In the course, activities to help the student develop trust in self and others begin early in the program because trust is essential to completion of the ropes course.

In a personal interview with Lucious Bullock, the Project Adventure and staff, Ronnie Sulkowski and Mark Leonard, the following benefits of the program were discussed:

- fulfills some of the needs which lead to attention seeking behaviors
- aids in developing leaders for the different activities
- encourages development of problem solving behaviors
- improves self concept
- helps student to overcome limits he has placed upon himself
- reduces aggressive behavior
- encourages experimentation and new modes of learning
- helps student to act out, talk about, and overcome fears
- aids in development of trust
- helps student learn consequences of his behavior
- improves race relations
- increases feelings of responsiblity for self and others
- develops concern for others
- understands reason for learning certain skills, i.e., rope tying
- increases team work and group participation
- the three major attitudinal problems: difficulty accepting supervision, lack of self control, and difficulties cooperating with peers and staff.

Other benefits reported are:

- helps passive kids get into mainstream (Ashville Citzen, 1980)
- develops new attitudes which lessens disciplinary problems (Kingston Daily Press).

At the present time, Project Adventure is in its second year of operation. Since its inception, only two students referred to the project have failed to complete the course which lasts for 8-10 weeks. The evaluation procedures are in a planning stage and will probably include both a self concept scale and an instructor rating scale.

Related Research

A similar program in New Mexico used with first offenders who have mental problems and those who are almost ready for release or parole has proved successful. Depression, paranoia, tension, worry and ego-centrism decreased significantly for the participants. This program has treated both adults and juveniles. For both, course failure was predictive (100% of the time) for recidivism (Kimball, 1979).

Summary and Conclusions

The teacher at the training school must meet the educational needs of youthful offenders-their students- by implemention of an individualized education plan. This plan is written according to the guidelines estabilished by the State Department of Public Instruction. These guidelines govern all programs and services for children with special needs including public schools.

An even greater challenge facing the teacher of youthful offenders is that of modifying behavioral and attitudinal problems. The most often identified behavioral problems are temper outbursts, other substance abuse, alcohol abuse, chronic fighting, and compulsive behavior. The attitudinal problems which are most often identified in the training school population include difficulty accepting supervision, lack of self control, difficulties in cooperation with both peers and staff, poor self concept, and trust.

An innovative program, Project Adventure, which is a ropes course facility involving physical and emotional risks, is proving to be a successful modifier of problem behaviors and attitudes. Many benefits of the program have been reported including development of problem solving behaviors, improved trust, improved self concept, redefining limits, reduction in aggressive

behavior and increased sense of responsibility. Attitude change occurs as a result of the program which demands cooperation, self con rol, trust, and acceptance of supervision.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLES INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS FOR YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS

DYS-1000 (8/

Individualized Educational Program

Date: _____

STUDENT	COMMITTEE
1. Name School Grade Current Placement Date of Birth Age 13	2. Name Position Initial Prepared by Faculty and Staff of a Training School. IEP From _____ to _____

3. Present Level of Educational Functioning	4. Annual Goal Statements	5. Instructional Objectives	6. Objective Criteria and Evaluation
Strengths PIAT -Scores in the areas of Mathematics (7.0), Reading Comprehension (7.9), and Spelling (7.1) suggests that Gary is working at grade placement level	1. To improve word recognition using word attack skills	1. will complete, with 75% accuracy, excercises dealing with: compound words, prefixes, suffixes, root words, syllabication and inflexional word endings.	1. Teacher observation and curriculum embedded evaluations using selected regular class and abailable resource materials
	2. To improve word recognition using phonetic analysis	2. The student will complete, with 75% accuracy, exercises dealing with: initial consonants, initial consonant blends, initial consonant diagraphs, final consonant blends, final consonant diagraphs, long vowels, short vowels, vowel diagraphs, and diphtongs.	2. Teacher observation and curriculum embedded evaluation and tests using selected regular class and available resorce materials
Needs PIAT -Reading Recognition score of 5.3 suggests a deficit in the areas of work attack skills and phonetic analysis -Functioning at the fractional level of Mathematics	3. To develop skills in the mathematical area of fractions	3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of fractions by solving, with 80% accuracy, problems dealing with: recognition and identification of fractional parts.	3. Teacher observation and curriculum embedded evaluations using selected regular class and available resource materials

Individualized Educational Program

Name_____ Page 2

3. Present Level of Educational Functioning	4. Annual Goal Statements	5. Instructional Objectives	6. Objective Criteria and Evaluation
	(cont.) 3. To develop skills in the mathematical area of fractions 4. To decrease amount of extreme assertive behavior in the are of demands and requests	addition and subtraction with common denominators, and fractional word problems. 4. will decrease the amount of extreme assertive behavior by becoming aware of voice intonations and sentence structure in the areas of requesting and demanding.	4. Teacher and staff observation progress will be determined by progression in the Mainstream Program

7. Educational Services to be Provided

A. Services Required	B. Date Initiated	C. Duration of Service	D. Individual Responsible for the Service
Resource Room	Sept. 19, 1980	Sept. 19, 1981	

Extent of time in the regular educational program 90%

Justification of the educational placement "Learning Disabilities" placement requested by SBC after evaluation of all assessment data.

8. I have had the opportunity to participate in the development of the Individual Educational Program

I agree with the Individual Education Program. (✓)

I disagree with the Individual Education Program. ( )

Parent's or Guardian's Signature

DYS-1000 (Rev.

Individualized Educational Program

Date: _____

STUDENT	COMMITTEE
1. Name School Grade Current Placement Date of Birth Age 16	2. Name Position Initial Prepared by Faculty and Staff of a Training School. IEP From _____ to _____

3. Present Level of Educational Functioning	4. Annual Goal Statements	5. Instructional Objectives	6. Objective Criteria and Evaluation
Strengths -Block Design 11 Differentiate patterns into parts and reproduce it Degree of planning ability -Object Assembly 11 Visual-motor coordination Assembly skills Needs -Vocabulary 4 Concept formation Cognitive development -Coding 4 Speed and accuracy in association Visual-motor intergration Ability to learn new materials	1. To increase cognitive development 2. To improve visual motor intergration 3. To increase concept formation	1. will complete worksheets on the following areas of cognitive development, with 65% accuracy: association, classification, and problem solving. 2. The student will increase his ability to intergrate visual and motor skills, with 70% accuracy. 3. will classify data by focusing on the areas of similarity and difference, essential attributes, conceptual sets, and language classification, with 60% accuracy.	1. Teacher observation and curriculum embedded evaluation using Cognitive Development Workbooks 2. Teacher observation and curriculum embedded evaluations using worksheets from Visual Closure Activities Visual Sequencing, and Visual Motor Activities 3. Teacher observation and curriculum embedded testing using DLM: Concept Building

Individualized Educational Program

Name _____ Page 2

3. Present Level of Educational Functioning	4. Annual Goal Statements	5. Instructional Objectives	6. Objective Criteria and Evaluation
PIAT -Subtest score of 3.5 for Reading Recognition suggest deficits in the areas of recognition, comprehension, and language skills	4. To improve reading comprehension	4. The student will complete the following objectives, with 70% accuracy: inferences, comparisons, evaluations, judgements, sequential ordering, main ideas, and following directions.	4. Teacher observations and curriculum embedded test and evaluations using Specific Skills Series and Taskmaster: Reading Comprehension
	5. To improve word attack skills	5.1 will complete the following structural analysis with 70% accuracy: compound words, prefixes, suffixes, root words, syllabication, and inflixional word endings. 5.2 will complete the following phonetic analysis skills, with 70% accuracy: initial consonants, initial consonant blends, initial consonant digraphs, final consonant blends, final consonant diagraphs, long vowels, short vowels, vowel diagraphs, and vowel diphthongs.	5. Teacher observations and curriculum embedded tests and evaluations using Foundations Program, Hayes or ESP: Phonetic worksheet or Language Arts Basic Skills & Concepts Library
	6. To improve basic grammar skills	6. will complete, with 70% accuracy the following grammar skills: punctuating sentences, building sentences, regognizing sentences, use of "a" and "an", singulars and plurals, use of "is", "are", "was", and "were", use of "have and "has", use of "this" and "that".	6. Teacher observations and curriculum embedded tests and evaluations using selected sections of Lanuage Arts Basic Skills & Concepts Library and Hayes Language Drills #3

Individualized Educational Program

Name_____ Page 3

3. Present Level of Educational Functioning	4. Annual Goal Statements	5. Instructional Objectives	6. Objective Criteria and Evaluation
	(cont.) 6. To improve basic grammar skills	"these", and "those", writing days of week and months, writing dates, writing holidays, abbreviations, proper names, titles, using "I", "me", "he", "she", "we", and "they", and the use of verbs.	

7. Educational Services to be Provided

A. Services Required	B. Date Initiated	C. Duration of Service	D. Individual Responsible for the Service
Resource Room	Sept. 19, 1980	Sept. 19, 1981	

Extent of time in the regular educational program 90%

Justification of the educational placement "Learning Disabilities" placement requested by SBC after evaluation of all assessment data.

8. I have had the opportunity to participate in the development of the Individual Educational Program

I agree with the Individual Education Program. (✓)

I disagree with the Individual Education Program. ( )

Parent's or Guardian's Signature

APPENDIX B

INDIVIDUALIZED WRITTEN PLAN OF ACTION

INDIVIDUALIZED WRITTEN PLAN OF ACTION

IEP Need: (as spelled out on IEP)

Instructional Objective:

Instructional Activities	Completion Date	Teacher Initial
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

APPENDIX C

PROJECT ADVENTURE

PROJECT ADVENTURE

The Challenge:

Project Adventure is a program that offers participating groups a series of activities which involve physical and emotional risks. Project Adventure consists of a specially designed obstacle course and a challenging ropes course. Safety and cooperation, as well as individual achievement are essential to the program. These qualities are emphasized by trained instructors who guide groups through the Ropes Course. The experience, similar to Outward Bound, also includes group sessions planned around the various obstacles to examine and share common reactions such as joy, fatique, compassion, laughter, and love.

The Reward:

This program is designed to help participants increase their ability to communicate with others and to become an effective member within a group that has a problem to solve. Attempting and succeeeding in these activities often give one a feeling of accomplishment, self-worth, and elation and a sense that the seemingly difficult is often quite possible.

The Goals:
1. to have a good time
2. to work as a team
3. to stretch yourself emotionally and psysically.

The activities which the program will use to attain thses goals will be many. However, a significant number of them will be very new to the students. The activities will be dependent both upon an individual's natural fear of falling, of leaping, and of heights and upon an individual's natural enjoyment of swinging, of balancing, and of successfully accomplishing something which was initially viewed as either fearful or impossible.

Safety:
The program is one which is very much concerned with maintaining a high level of safety. Protective devices and procedures have been carefully thought out and tested. We believe that the program is responsibly designed and that the staff is fully qualified to implement it successfully.

Classroom climate:
The emphasis throughout the entire program will be one which places value on the act of trying. We operate with an approach which is warm and supportive but which expects that each student will be willing to make an honest effort.

Concept of Project Adventure:

To increase a participant's sense of personal confidence.

To increase mutual support within a group.

To develop an increased level of agility and physical coordination.

To develop an increased joy in one's physical self and in being with others.

To develop an increased familiarity and identification with the natural world.

To have fun doing those giddly physical things that you enjoyed as a child and which have since been declared "childish".

Considerations:

Each ropes course is necessarily different due to the student population, the area available for the site, the imagination of the builders, etc. Also, each teacher begins to use the course differently as his confidence in equipment, techniques and his own ability increases.

What to Wear:

(Clothes will get dirty.)

Long, loose-fitting jeans or other long pants (tight pants will tear)
T-shirt, possibly with long-sleeves shirt over it
Lace-up hiking shoes, boots, or tennis shoes (no slip-on shoes)
Heavy socks (no knee-high nylons or footlets)
Cap or bandana, if desired
(Fingernails should be short)